

# Assessing Your Resources – Money, Personnel, Time

Discussion leader: Michael Turney, Ph.D., ABC  
Professor Emeritus of Communication & Independent Consultant

Good morning.

My name is Michael Turney. I am a semi-retired professor emeritus of communication from Northern Kentucky University, near Cincinnati, and an occasional public relations consultant.

I'm here to facilitate a discussion of the role resources play in strategic planning and am delighted to have a panel of three very competent and highly experienced communication professionals joining me.

Our session this morning will return to the conference thread Kim Skeltis introduced yesterday morning in her session on creating a strategic communications plan outline.

- As she explained, the purpose of strategic planning is to produce a roadmap that effectively describes what messages need to be prepared and delivered to which target audiences through which channels to achieve specific ends.
- After that broad brush overview of the planning process, later sessions zoomed in on some of the specific steps in the planning process and reminded us that we need to continually observe, analyze, and question our environment, our target audiences, and our goals as we develop our plans.
- Today we have sessions addressing additional steps in the strategic communication planning process that will fully prepare you for the challenge of tomorrow's interactive workshop where you'll actually write a strategic communication plan.

## ➤ **What we'll be talking about for the next 90 minutes of so is assessing your resources in light of the strategic plans you're trying to develop.**

By doing this, you can achieve a realistic match between what you want to do and what you are actually able to do based on available money, personnel, technology, and time.

We're focusing on this because it makes no sense to plan for – and thereby implicitly promise – something you can't possibly deliver with the resources at your disposal.

- And, doing so can really come back and bite you if you have to report up the chain of command: "No, we weren't able to produce what we promised in our strategic plan."
- Unfortunately, such confessions are often necessary.

After all, when you're excited about a great idea that emerged during a brain-storming session – for example, adding streaming video to the company intranet – it's easy to focus on the benefits and the praise you want to receive while ignoring the costs and ramifications of trying to do it.

But, before proceeding and before you start over-promising, you need to ask yourself ...

- Does our existing network have adequate bandwidth?
- Can it handle whatever additional usage this exciting new capability might bring?
- Can existing workstations handle this new content or will they need to be upgraded?
- Do we have enough professional quality production and editing equipment?
- Who'll produce the new programming, and/or where will we obtain it?
- What costs will we incur in obtaining this programming?
- Will additional staff need to be hired? Or will existing staff be re-assigned?

A good strategic plan would take all of these questions and more into account.

Sometimes – perhaps, most often, especially today – plans have to be scaled back due to limited resources. But, it's also possible for an initial idea to be expanded if careful consideration of the resources reveals that its benefits could be multiplied by a relatively small increase in resources.

➤ **The panelists I am about to introduce will help us consider why and how to assess and balance our resources as we do strategic communication planning.**

### **① Our first panelist/presenter is Michael Conway.**

Michael Conway is Director of Public Affairs for the Wayne County Airport Authority, which manages Detroit Metropolitan Airport and Willow Run Airport.

- In this role, he is responsible for public affairs, media relations, community relations, customer service and the residential sound insulation program at the 12th busiest airport in the United States.

- Michael has been an executive at the Detroit Airport for almost 23 years.
- On a national level, he is a long time member of the American Association of Airport Executives and has held leadership positions in the Airports Council International (ACI) which represents virtually all commercial airports in North America.

Earlier this month, Michael was honored by the ACI by becoming only the second person to ever receive a Ted Bushelman Legacy Award for Creativity and Excellence. It is the airport industry's most prestigious honor for a communications and marketing professional and was presented at ACI's Marketing and Communications Conference in Montreal.

- Knowing and having worked with Ted Bushelman for whom this award was named, I was very impressed to learn that Michael had won this award.

## ② Our second panelist/presenter is Mary Henige, APR.

Are you ever struck by how quirky and coincidental numbers can be? I was a few days ago as I was reviewing the bios of our panelists for today's session.

- Remember when I mentioned that Michael Conway, our first panelist, has worked for Detroit Airport for almost 23 years? – These days, staying with any organization for that long is pretty remarkable.
- Then, when I looked at our second presenter's bio, one of the first things I saw was that Mary Henige just celebrated 23rd years of employment with General Motors.
- How's that for a coincidence? – Another 23 years, also with one company, also in Detroit, also doing public relations work, and also here on this panel.

Mary Henige has done a variety of communications work in her 23 years with General Motors and is now GM's Director of Social Media, Diversity and Broadcast Communications.

- In this position, she works with marketing and leads GM's social media efforts including external blogs; the [www.gmreinvention.com](http://www.gmreinvention.com) web site, which was launched after the company filed for Chapter 11; senior leader web and Twitter chats; Facebook fan pages; and other virtual consumer engagement.
- Her communications teams also work with other GM areas to broaden the reach of GM's "stories" including a weekly VNR feed and extensive media outreach.

Mary is an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). A past president of the Detroit PRSA chapter, and was very instrumental in bringing the 2008 PRSA International Conference to Detroit last year.

- That conference attracted roughly 2,000 public relations professionals, an additional 1,000 students, and pumped an estimated \$2 million into Detroit's economy.

### **③ Our third panelist/presenter is Marilyn Sandifur.**

Many of you already know Marilyn Sandifur. You've known and worked with her in her role as the vice chair of AAPA's Public Relations Committee.

In her day job, Marilyn is the Senior Media and Public Relations Specialist and Spokesperson for the Port of Oakland.

- In the nine years she's been with the Port of Oakland, her challenges have included being the project leader of its largest festival which attracts 35,000 visitors, serving on its first sustainability task force, promoting stories about the port that reached millions of TV viewers across the US, and helping earn a Marcom Gold Award for Advertising.

Before joining the Port of Oakland, Marilyn was as an award-winning broadcast journalist who specialized in investigative and documentary work.

- During her time with KCBS radio in San Francisco, Marilyn helped that station win a prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award and a George Foster Peabody Award, the broadcast equivalent of a Pulitzer Prize.

**➤ Now, let's get down to business and talk about the ways we, as public relations practitioners, need to take resources into account when we do strategic public relations planning.**